

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1313
By Hawk

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Staff Sergeant Mark
Oscar Edwards.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans continue this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the Tennessee Army National Guard today; and

WHEREAS, one such courageous Volunteer, Staff Sergeant Mark Oscar Edwards of H Company, Second Squadron of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard, died while pursuing freedom and democracy for the people of Iraq; and

WHEREAS, like thousands of others of this Nation's sons and daughters, Staff Sergeant Edwards did not shrink from serving in a combat zone, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty and to free the Iraqi people from the chains of injustice; and

WHEREAS, a beloved father, husband, son, and brother, Staff Sergeant Edwards now lies at rest in the sacred ground of America, which he loved so dearly and gave his life to protect; and

WHEREAS, by displaying the patriotism and honor for which he was well known, Mark Edwards was the embodiment of the American hero; he believed deeply in America and the virtue of its cause, never hesitating to sacrifice himself to defend his beloved Nation, its citizens, or a fellow serviceman; and

WHEREAS, Mark Edwards, a graduate of Unicoi High School, enjoyed a life lived to the fullest, boldly rising to whatever challenge presented itself; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from high school, Mark Edwards joined the Regular Army and spent much of his four-year enlistment in Germany; he then served as a member of Erwin's Tennessee Army National Guard unit for many years; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Mark Edwards was a highly decorated soldier; he received the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Army Achievement Medal, a testament to his bravery and integrity; and

WHEREAS, in civilian life, Mark Edwards worked assiduously as a mechanic with Bailey Company, Incorporated, of Piney Flats, Tennessee, a testament to his diligent work ethic and commitment to excellence in every endeavor; and

WHEREAS, a devout Christian, Staff Sergeant Edwards was an active member of Unicoi Baptist Church, which he served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, this superlative individual won the hearts of many, was deeply devoted to his family, and always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he will be dearly missed by his beloved wife, Kimberly; his three children, Drew Edwards, Whitney Dayton, and Jerod Bailey; one brother, Paul Edwards; two sisters and one brother-in-law, Brenda and R.H. Herrell and Teresa Garland; his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Kenneth and Connie Dayton; brother-in-law, Kenneth Matthew Dayton; special friends, Tammy Dayton, Brittany Dayton, Ronnie and Angila Dayton, Bill Oliver, Catherine Oliver, Brandon Oliver, Daisy Woodby, and Scottie Mathes; and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins; and

WHEREAS, this valiant Tennessean leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, a man of great courage and gallantry, Staff Sergeant Mark Edwards lost his life while serving his country and the cause in which he believed, and for that sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the Tennessee National Guard, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Edwards's dedication to excellence and his love of his family, his fellow soldiers, and his country, as exemplified by his valiant defense of all that he held dear,

stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our Nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly should pause to remember the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of this exceptional soldier and human being, the late Staff Sergeant Mark Edwards, Tennessee Army National Guard, whose loss is mourned by a grateful nation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Staff Sergeant Mark Oscar Edwards, a man of impeccable character, limitless courage, and stalwart commitment to the defense of his Nation as a member of the Tennessee Army National Guard, reflecting fondly upon his bravery and dedication to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and friends of Mark Edwards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.